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SCIENCE

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 20, 1891.

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF GOVERNMENT.¹

GOVERNMENT should be looked upon as the business agency of the nation, and the science and art of government are the science and art of conducting this business agency. The various branches of administration have arisen through pressure from without. Everything that the people have demanded to be done with sufficient unanimity and persistence has been eventually undertaken by the government. One bureau after another has been created by law, placed in charge of proper officers, and conducted to the best of the latter's ability. Most bureaus have grown and expanded in their scope and usefulness. Many have been several times reorganized and the service perfected.

Although the various systems of administrative operation have been largely empirical, devised by men who had little preliminary preparation for the work, improved through the growth and demands of the service, and brought to perfection by thoughtful study of the needs of the public in each individual case, still the whole rests on a rational basis and constitutes a great system of government. The general laws and principles underlying this system constitute the science of government. The carrying out of these laws and principles is the art of government, and although, as in the case of almost all the practical arts, it was empirically developed, there is no reason to doubt that it will be as greatly improved and perfected by its reduction to a science and its enlightened prosecution as such as all the other great industrial arts have been since science has been applied to them.

Among the most promising sources of advantage in the scientific method is the comparative study of government operations. While from a very broad point of view all government is the same, when viewed at all in detail the greatest individual differences are found. Much of this diversity grows out of the natural differences in the conditions of nations, but fully as much is due to the differences in the methods adopted to accomplish the same purpose. Amid all these varying methods there must be great differences in their efficiency. Some are coarse and clumsy, while others are precise and refined. There are all the grades that exist in the manifold mechanical devices of the other arts, those which are best being always those which have most thoroughly utilized natural forces, including the social forces.

The scientific study of government would make the comparative study of methods a leading feature, with a view to the recommendation of those which under all circumstances are the very best. This is only one out of any required number of illustrations that might be given of the superiority of the scientific method in government.

In the science of political economy the subject of government operations is destined to occupy an increasingly prominent place. It is safe to say that no chair of political economy in any institution of learning has ever taught or attempted to teach the practical workings of public adminis-

tration — the way in which the business of a nation is conducted. It is impossible to teach this branch of political economy without the means of a direct examination of the different systems of government business as they are conducted by their respective bureaus. Each great system, such as those of finance, land, patents, etc., would require a course of lectures, with repeated visits to the departments, inspection of records, books, papers, merchandise, etc. This would require a legal right to prosecute the study in this only practicable way. Nothing short of a national institution, created and authorized by law to teach the science and art of government, could successfully carry out this scheme of education. As a safeguard to our institutions, not less than as means of national progress and enlightenment, no other educational scheme is equal to it in importance.

A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, ITS CHARACTER AND PURPOSE.¹

THE National University recommended by Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and many later presidents and statesmen is almost certain to be realized in the near future. It is the object of this paper to offer some hints as to what ought to be its character and purpose.

In the first place, it should be distinctly national, the creature of the American people and devoted to their use and needs. To this end it should be located at the seat of government and should be exclusively the product of the federal government. It should also be in the fullest sense representative, as is the government itself. Its scholarships should be held entirely by Americans, and should be distributed with local uniformity throughout the entire domain of the United States. Recognizing the intellectual homogeneity of the whole American people, it should have representatives from every section of the country. This could probably best be secured by allotting a given number of scholarships to each congressional district on the basis of representation as determined by the census enumeration. Candidates should be admitted by competitive examination held by the faculty or an examining board appointed by the faculty, to be absolutely free from all political influence. As the intellectual homogeneity of the American people relates to capacity and not to attainment, in order to secure such universal representation, the university should be accompanied by a preparatory department, and those who pass the examination for the university should have no advantage over those who pass for the preparatory department, except that, if a sufficient number pass for the former, examinations for the latter need not be held. Candidates who enter the preparatory department should be given precedence over those from the same district at the end of that course for admission to the university.

The faculty should be chosen by a commission consisting of the most eminent scholars and scientific men in the country, who are entirely above personal and political bias, such, for example, as the National Academy, the Board of Regents

¹ Read before Section I of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Washington, D.C., by Lester F. Ward, Aug. 20, 1891.

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